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ABSTRACT

This study examined the phenomena of the ownership of the classroom by a cooperating teacher and the constraints this imposes on the student teacher. Eight secondary language arts student interns completing a 14-week teaching internship participated in the study. Case studies were developed from data which included weekly unstructured interviews, bi-weekly journal accounts, two classroom observations, and structured interviews before and after the internship. Four facets of classroom ownership which formed distinct barriers for the intern teacher are identified and discussed: (1) the cooperating teacher's physical presence in the classroom; (2) the artifacts of teaching, e.g., the grade book, teacher's desk, building and room keys, and even the pupils considered as human artifacts whom the teacher "owns"; (3) length of the internship and interpersonal relationships; and (4) experience and decision making power. (JD)

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Four Facets of Classroom Ownership Emerging from a Grounded Theory of Novice Language Arts Teachers' Knowledge of Practice

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In 1962, Sarason, Davidson, and Blatt wrote a book entitled The Preparation of Teachers: An Unstudied Problem. Nearly 30 years later, the title remains provocative. Some might argue that is state of the art. Despite much study and the focus of research journals, e.g., Journal of Teacher Education, Action in Teacher Education, Journal of the Association of Teacher Educators, and the recently developed Journal of Teaching and Teacher Education, basic research problems continue to be posed about the way teachers learn how to teach. Zeichner (1980) argues that there is little systematic research about what really happens during student teaching. That contention is supported by Lanier and Little (1986), who describe the research base as

> desultory in nature, poorly synthesized, and weakly criticized. Although there has been a good deal of data gathering and thought, there seems to be an excess of the former and a dearth of the latter. As a consequence, misrepresentation and overgeneralization of research findings has occurred in response to growing public interest (p. 535).

In the last 15 years, there has been growing research interest directed toward understanding the teaching/learning process by acknowledging the perspectives of participants directly involved in the task. In part, a response to the inadequate, incomplete findings of educational research that Dunkin and Biddle (1974) term process-product research, non-experimental methodologies provide a means of documenting and understanding the intentions and implicit theories of teachers.

The teacher thinking research base documents important differences in the ways teachers identified as novices,

experienced, or experts conceptualize teaching (Berliner, 1987; Clift, 1988). In part, recent research, e. g., Berliner, Clift, supports previous investigations suggesting that student learning is not at the center of the field experience component of teacher education experiences (Hoy, 1967; Hoy & Reese, 1977; Iannaccone, 1963.

Teaching settings have been described as complex (Jackson, 1968), multidimensional and unpredictable (Doyle, 1977), and composed of instable and unique events replete with value conflict (Schon, 1983). For student- or intern-teachers, an already complex work environment is complicated further by the unique role created by teacher preparation. Being a student at the same time one is a teacher is an under-investigated problem attendant to field experiences. Student-teaching or its equivalent caps one experience (undergraduate teaching preparation) at the same time that it introduces another (full-teaching responsibility). This two-fold role is a potentially critical variable in the development of teaching experience and expertise. Iannaccone and Button's (1964) oft-cited study identified student-teaching as a transitional period, characterized by ambivalent feelings, insecurity, and contradictions. As will be developed below, the ambiguous student-teacher role sends an unambiguous message to everyone in the learning setting: a real teacher owns his or her classroom.

Method

Participants. Eight secondary language arts student interns completing a 14-week teaching-internship participated in the *in situ* investigation. The internship was the final requirement and second major field experience (six weeks of student-teaching preceded the internship), of a five year teacher certification sequence at a major teaching-research institution in the Midwest. Interns had completed baccalaureate degrees prior to both field experiences The 14-week teaching placements represented the full range of grades 7-12 language arts, e.g., senior high (grades 10-12) composition, literature, grammar, and speech/forensics, and junior high (grades 7-9) reading, writing, grammar, and spelling. The teaching-interns were placed in six school districts (eight different buildings), in communities that represented rural, small city, suburban, and inner city schools.

Study Design. The non-experimental study demonstrated two characteristics that Yin (1989) cites as prerequisites for labeling an inquiry qualitative. First, data collection and analysis were not guided by *a priori* theories. Second, the investigation focused on a naturally occurring event. A qualitative research approach in education parallels approaches common in anthropology, the study of folk lore, and sociology, e.g., investigations of naturally occurring events, characterized by thick description or ethnography, in depth interviewing, participant observation, and inductive theorizing.

Yin's (1989) analytic case study provided the

investigation's basic design. Each case study was developed from data which included weekly unstructured interviews, bi-weekly journal accounts, two classroom observations, and structured interviews before and after the anchoring event of the study, the 14-week internship. Data analysis produced two separate but mutually supporting products: a) eight independently derived case studies; and b) a multiple case study produced by pattern-matching the eight individual cases.

Consistent with qualitative research approaches (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and case study research (Yin, 1989), a variety of data sources were identified. Data were collected over a seven month period of time and triangulated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation is a process by which data are collected to represent multiple perspectives of the same phenomenon for the purpose of building a trustworthy and credible case.

Throughout data collection, analyzation, and presentation, participants were co-investigators. This assumption is key to naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Informal member-checks established the accuracy of the investigator's on-going data analysis. Formal member-checks occurred at the conclusion of the study when the student-interns read and reacted to drafts of their individual case studies. Their comments were included in the appendix of the final draft of the larger study (Kleinsasser, 1988).

Audit trails were created to build credibility and trust-

worthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Analogous to a financial audit, the audit trail permitted an external review of the data and data analysis procedures. One set of data was selected randomly for an external review. An investigator familiar with qualitative and analytic research methods read for general categories and themes. A draft of the case study was submitted for inspection as well. Analytic findings from the outside review identified the same categories and conclusions that the investigator found.

Data Analysis. Glaser & Strauss' (1967) constant-comparative method was the analysis technique, providing for ongoing data collection and analysis. Constant-comparative analysis provided a cycle of analysis for each separate case, resulting in the first level of analysis. Pattern-matching was the second level of analysis, yielding a single case study, or analytic generalization of the knowledge of practice articulated by novice language arts interns. This grounded the theory emerging from the investigation. Grounded theory is created as the investigator moves from site to site or participant to participant, sampling theories. Schon's categorization of reflection-in-action (1983, 1987) was used to analyze data and pose hypotheses about the teaching practice of the participants relative to their problem description, problem solving, and problem setting.

Analysis Results. Content analysis of the data comprising each case produced themes illustrating the unique teaching practice of each teaching-intern. Table 1 presents those themes.

Table 1 about here.

The case studies were subjected to pattern-matching for the purpose of developing a general explanation of a multiple set of cases (Yin, 1989) and to generate hypotheses (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Themes common to each of the interns were matched, regrouped, and given a thematic title that encompassed themes with details unique to cases but demonstrating overall similarity. The match yielded three under-girding themes common to all eight cases: a) the task of becoming a real teacher manifested by classroom ownership, the constraints of the student teacher role, and the need to gain experience; b) interpersonal relationships; and c) curriculum and instruction--planning driven by time. See Figure 1.

Figure 1 about here.

Data support the analytic generalization that the task of becoming a real teacher, as manifested through classroom ownership, is composed of four distinct barriers for the intern teacher. They include, a) the cooperating-teacher's physical presence, b) the artifacts of teaching, c) time, and d) experience. Figure 2 depicts the four barriers of classroom ownership.

Figure 2 about here.

Facets of Classroom Ownership

Physical presence. The cooperating teacher's physical presence is one kind of ownership. By simply being within eyesight or earshot, the cooperating teacher maintained control of/responsibility for the students, e.g., monitored entrances and exits, answered student questions even in the presence of the intern-teacher, remained the final authority for language art students, and often, the language arts intern teacher.

Classroom ownership is both obvious and subtle. A subtle demonstration of ownership is illustrated through one of the observations in Anne's[1] classroom. The eighth grade English class began at 2:00 and dismissed at 2:50. During the first 25 minutes, a study hall, students read silently. At the beginning of the second half of the period, Anne distributed reading books and volunteers read parts of the story out loud, round robin fashion. All of the students were attentive. During this time, the cooperating teacher was at her desk in the front of the room, stapling papers together. Five or six minutes before the end of the hour, a school secretary entered the room to speak to the cooperating teacher and then left, disrupting the group reading

[1]All names are pseudonyms.

activity. A new reader began. At the same time, students, one or two at a time, approached the cooperating teacher's desk (quarter grades had been handed out earlier and students were consulting with her about their marks) or left the room. The incident not only illustrates the disruptions that were a constant source of irritation to Anne, it illustrates a co-operating teacher who retained authority while contributing to classroom distractions.

The effectiveness of the cooperating teacher's right of ownership and authority is demonstrated by the interns' self descriptions of their classroom roles: a big kid that hangs around, the second-in-command, on the bench, a side kick, a co-pilot, followed by a cloud, but most importantly their acknowledgment of the appropriateness of the role under the unique circumstances of being an intern teacher.

Chris reasons:

> I totally respect her right to do what she does in her own classroom . . . I feel very strongly that it's,.. .it's [cooperating teacher's] program . . . she has her reasons for what she does and I feel like she has taken me in, out of her own goodness, because it's a lot of work to take me in, and she's more than willing...she always wants to know my ideas. But I know that she really believes in what she does and I would never . . . want her to change that . . . for me to change... to do differently would totally contradict what she's trying to achieve.

Above all, each remains a <u>student</u> teacher. This is corroborated by verbalized, overt characterizations of the teaching interns by students, e.g., "You're not the real teacher." Supporting this conclusion are data describing the interns' accompanying the

cooperating teacher to lunch, to committee meetings, to parent-teacher conferences, or other instructional and curricular-related sessions.

Present, but not always acknowledged, that is, left out of the conversation, and not always introduced, interns reported feeling awkward, unnecessary, and out-of-place. Says Ilsa:

> I'm somewhere between the kids and being teacher, I have not yet been a real teacher in this experience. Like one of my kids said [this] to me the other day, "Why are we doing this?" ... I said, "Because I'm an English teacher." "You're not a real teacher yet."

Even when the intern teacher was standing at the front of the classroom, ostensibly in full control, he or she was bypassed for the cooperating teacher--who sometimes was present (as in the illustration of Anne's classroom above), often not. This is further documented by observational data of intercom interruptions calling for the cooperating teacher or hand-delivered messages from the central office. Additionally, three of the teaching interns (Ilsa, Greaser, and Simon) demonstrated their lesser position or deference to their cooperating teachers' higher positions by referring to them formally as Mr., Ms., or Mrs. in journal accounts and interviews, throughout the internship period.

<u>The artifacts of teaching</u>. A second element of ownership includes what will be identified here as the artifacts of teaching, e.g., the grade book, teacher's desk, mailbox, daily announcement bulletin, building and room keys, and the students. This absence of ownership and, therefore, absence of belonging,

is demonstrated by not having an individual mailbox, being loaned the grade book just long enough to record grades and complete down slips or not being allowed to complete down slips independently. Interns shared the teacher's desk and daily announcements. For the interns in this study, all of above activities or responsibilities define a real teacher. Linus reflects on his teaching internship this way:

> I just think it will be a lot more enjoyable when it's my own room . . . it makes a lot of difference and you don't have the pressure of being evaluated every day by someone observing you, seeing what you're doing right and doing wrong . . . I think the biggest thing is your own mailbox because occasionally, my stuff gets stuck in her mailbox. It sounds really stupid. That's not why I want to be a teacher, so I can have my own mail box, but...I don't know. It's just stuff like that that may make you feel like you belong and you should be there . . . It's not like I own the kids, or anything, but I own the class to the extent that they are solely my own responsibility and I'm there from start to finish. Right now, to the kids, I'm kind of, some big kid that hangs around.

Similarly, Ilsa describes a real teacher in this interview excerpt late in the study:

> Somebody who has total control over what they do . . . Someone who...has the grade book in their possession at all times...someone who doesn't have to ask to do this or that or another thing with their class. Someone who just basically has the planning and everything completely to themselves. This is my class, I don't share my class with anyone else, except in a team teaching situation which is fine. And there's never, there's never a higher teaching authority. You know, "If you don't like what I say, then go to the cooperating teacher and maybe he or she will fix it," that kind of thing.

By describing themselves as transient or mobile, e.g., not having anything to pack up upon leaving at the end of the 14

weeks, the interns depict their non-status in the learning environment where everyone has his or her place. In one of the final interviews, Simon describes his non-status:

> Interviewer: So when you leave here (the internship setting), you'll leave with your briefcase. You won't have your Kleenex box to take home or your coffee cup...
>
> Simon: My students use up all the Kleenex and I don't drink coffee, so none of that.
>
> Interviewer: No personal belongings?
>
> Simon: No. Not even my flies are mine [from a Lord of the Flies bulletin board].
>
> Interviewer: They belong to the school?
>
> Simon: No [cooperating teacher] said she'd like to have them so I'll give them to her . . .
>
> Interviewer: Did you have your own mail box here?
>
> Simon: They...didn't even put me on the, their sign-in roster. they said they were going to and I had to, all these weeks, I had to sign my name at the bottom . . .
>
> Interviewer: How many teachers do you know by name out here?
>
> Simon: I don't know hardly any of them by first name...you can't say their name, first name in front of the students and I don't see them that much when students aren't around...Mrs. [cooperating teacher], I call her Mrs. [name]. Everybody calls her [her first name] . . .
>
> Interviewer: ...when you're sitting and talking like you did after class today and you use names...or wouldn't you use names?
>
> Simon: I don't think really we've had occasion to use, use names. I don't, I don't know if I've ever heard her call me by my first name. A couple kids in fifth hour try to get away with it [laughs].
>
> Interviewer: But not your cooperating teacher.

Simon: I don't think I've ever heard her. Maybe she doesn't know what it is [laughs].

Interview and journal data from Linus' case echo the experience of Simon:

Linus: I was working at the desk today, and after about two hours, all the drawers were out and there were papers on the floor all around the desk and the desk was piled with stuff.

Interviewer: Your desk or her desk?

Linus: My desk...well, "the desk" ...and I can just tell, it's like, she was just looking at it and thinking, "This guy is a pig," because everything's always in place with her . . . she's so hung up about, like, all the little details, like her grade book. OH, MY GOD! You have to use a black pen in the grade book or she'll just freak. If you use a blue pen to write a grade down, she'll just... (Interview, March 7);

I thought my coop. teacher was going to kill me today. I loaned a pen to a student & she didn't return it. My coop. teacher actually went walking through the halls looking into classrooms to try and find the student (Journal entry, April 11).

Lastly, there is substantial evidence from this investigation that learners are the human artifacts of teaching. Interview and journal documentation consistently reflect references to "my students", "my kids", "my seniors", "my girls", "my eighth graders" as interns talked about interactions with students. A real teacher's ownership of students is evident in Greaser's family-like characterization of a classroom:

We're in someone else's house or in someone else's classroom and we live by their rules, pretty much . . . I think that these are his or her students and the students know that. they know that you're not the teacher . . . They [students] can make you feel that you are not the teacher and that wasn't true in my case. But, I think that can be true and I can see that as being a problem (Greaser).

Time. A third face of ownership can be related to time and interpersonal relationships. Participants in this study described the 14-week teaching internship as being both too long and too short. It was too long to be in someone else's classroom with someone else's students and someone else's curricular and instructional plan. It was too short to develop rapport with students necessary for the development of interpersonal relationships that interns articulated as important to positive learning environments.

Coming into the classroom mid-semester, described as in medias res, a Latin phrase meaning "in the middle of things," was disruptive for all of the intern teachers (Kleinsasser, 1989). Neither student nor teacher, they felt out of place. Says Ilsa,

> . . . things like . . . teacher appreciation breakfast yesterday. I had absolutely no desire to go. Absolutely none. On the one hand, I don't feel like a real teacher in this building. Number two, I wouldn't know anybody.

Feeling out-of-place was exacerbated by learning names and institutional or classroom routines well after they had been established for everyone else in the learning setting. Interns acknowledged their confusion or philosophical conflict in getting a sense of goals and objectives for the class during the teaching internship (Anne, Linus, Simon) and/or acceptance of the status quo, "since it was only 14 weeks" (Chris, Greaser, Ilsa, Sean, Terry).

Leaving before the natural end of the semester was difficult for the interns as well. They compacted units of study, i.e.,

read books faster, corrected and returned papers, and recorded grades. Most of them missed the end-of-the-year ceremonies that formalize school's closure for both student and teacher, e. g., school parties, the prom, field trips, commencement. It is at events like commencement that teachers are acknowledged and thanked by the school and civic communities for their service to students. Only two the interns reported participating in closure activities. Terry attended a teachers' banquet and Linus, the prom.

Greaser, an exception to this characterization, was the only teaching-intern to return to the same student-teaching site for his teaching-internship. He was also the only intern active, by his request, in assistant coaching duties. He had a locker in the coaches' room and referred to positive relationships with the male coaching staff whom he joined during lunch-time when the coaches played chess.

Experience. The cooperating teacher possess a fourth criterion of classroom ownership, experience. Experience is exemplified by having instructional and curricular decision-making power. It is files of materials and ideas--on hand and/or in mind. It is more if not better knowledge than that of the intern-teacher concerning what will work with a particular group of students in a particular time frame, i.e., less of a trial and error, what will work today approach. In short, interns looked to experience as the producer of confidence which represented an important resource in a setting characterized as complex,

changing, and ambiguous. Near the end of the teaching experience, Greaser concludes:

> I thought that that, being somebody else's cooperating teacher, what would I do, and I think I'd sit down and explain to them, before we started...if it was on the six weeks, I'd do it differently, but if it was on the 14 weeks, I'd say, "I know you're anxious to teach and you're ready to do, but try to sit out for a couple of weeks. Try to get to know the students. I'll have you work one on one or in small groups, but we'll break you in that way. Trust me. That's the way I did it. It works out better in the end. I know you don't agree with it and I know you think you're ready to go and I did too, but trust me." And I think I would gradually turn the classes over to him or her...I think I would do that and towards the end, gradually, make the transition back.

For Sean, learning through experience lessens the effect of what she acknowledges as the trial and error approach of a novice teacher. When Sean identifies her weaknesses, she says this,

> Experience: I just , I think I'll learn for the next 20 years about things I should do and shouldn't do and what works and what won't. At this point, I'll just have to try it and see if it works. And it is doesn't, mark it off the list and don't do it again. Or maybe something that doesn't work this next year might work five years down the road. I might know how to do it more appropriately so it's, it's better. Or at least more effective.
>
> Interviewer: Where do you think your understanding of that came from:
>
> Sean: Um, I guess just trial and error again. Obviously I've got a lot of ideas in my head that an experienced teacher might not have or might not ever want to try where I'm willing to try and let myself fall on my face. To a certain extent anyway. And an experienced teacher might just be able to think and say no, that's not going to work, where I'd have to do it first and find out.

Summary of the four facets of ownership. All of the components cited above--the cooperating teacher's physical presence, the artifacts of teaching, time, experience--firmly establish classroom ownership in the hands of the cooperating teacher. While bridling under the yoke of ownership (Linus described himself as his cooperating teacher's property), the majority of interns acknowledged the graciousness of their cooperating teachers for taking them in, as if they were, indeed, homeless teachers--educational transients. Reasons Anne, "I didn't figure people wanted to have a student teacher, because I would be wrecking their class for six weeks". Despite a sometimes rocky intern-teacher/cooperating-teacher relationship, in the final interview, when asked what one final thing she would say to the cooperating teacher, part of Chris' response was, "...just that I appreciated that fact that she had taken me in."

Discussion

The purpose of this non-experimental investigation was to generate hypotheses relative to the grounded theory of practice articulated by language arts teaching-interns. One of the products, a set of eight individual case studies, provided the base for a second level of analysis, case study pattern-matching. Constant comparative analyses of interview, journal, and observational data sources support an analytic generalization that classroom ownership is an undergirding theme of teaching practice for the language arts interns in this investigation. Four facets

of ownership were identified, the physical presence of the cooperating teacher, the artifacts of teaching, time, and experience.

For secondary language arts intern-teachers, classroom ownership may be synonymous with instructional authority which represents permanence, belonging, and responsibility. Classroom ownership as a salient variable in the student-teacher/ cooperating-dyad is supported by other research (Tollefson and Kleinsasser, in preparation). Also supported by the findings of this study, is Lanier and Little's point (1986) that field experiences do not necessarily generate an awareness of the interplay among psychological, sociological, and curricular theories. Few references to educational foundation courses or espoused educational theory support Zeichner's (1980) similar research finding. Analytic generalizations from the study undertaken here offer little documentation that student learning is a focus of the articulation of practice by interns. This supports previous findings of Hoy, 1967; Hoy & Reese, 1977; and Iannaccone, 1963. Despite an emphasis of special needs learners since 1975, and promulgation of Public Law 94-142, The Education for all Handicapped Children Act, there is not one specific reference to P.L. 94-142 in seven months worth of data collection.

Analytic generalizations from this study suggest that a reasonable extension of Iannaccone and Button's (1964) depiction of student-teaching as a period of transition characterized by

ambivalent feelings, insecurity, and contradictions, is that field experiences send an abundantly clear, unambiguous message to pre-service teachers: ownership is what real teachers and real teaching is all about.

The objectives of pre-service field experiences, particularly master's level internships and all variety of five year or extended teacher education programs, need to be examined in light of these experimental and non-experimental findings. While there is considerable interest in various models of reflective teaching (Gore, 1987; Cruickshank, Horton, & Fay, 1981; Korthagen, 1985), findings from this study suggest that the pre-service field experiences pivot on the teacher role, not necessarily on learning how to teach. Descriptions of the teacher role are verbalized by the novices in this study almost exclusively in cultural and social language, not the language of educational foundations courses such as psychology or development or even the language of content, e.g., literature, writing, criticism. Potentially, the most disturbing analytical conclusion from this study is that pre-service field experiences magnify the implicit belief of both pre-service and in-service teachers that real teachers have the right to exercise ownership. While ownership implies responsibility and stewardship, it also implies the ultimate authority and inherent right to do what I want.

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Table 1

Thematic Summary of the Case Studies.

Anne:
a) The humanity of teaching: building and modeling positive interpersonal relationships;
b) Ambiguity: English curriculum versus student self concept building; deference to the cooperating teacher's ownership of the classroom versus implementing her own style of management and instruction; gaining experience versus disappointment in the placement;
c) Time and the rhythm of school;
d) Non-teaching priorities.

Chris:
a) Ownership and responsibility for the teaching setting;
b) Caring, cooperation among students, and growth of group rapport;
c) Growth of self awareness;
d) The importance of experience in learning to teach;
e) Effective planning and teaching practices.

Greaser:
a) Respect for and deference to the cooperating teacher's experience
b) Caring about students and developing positive relationships with them;
c) The rhythm of instruction--units, weeks, days, the instruction hour;
d) Language arts planning and evaluation;
e) Classroom management, discipline, and organization.

Ilsa:
a) Interpersonal relationships;
b) Teaching as performance;
c) Planning and gaining experience through trial and error;
d) The legitimacy of classroom-created knowledge;
e) Teacher ownership and independence in the classroom.

Linus:
a) Gaining confidence through experience;
b) A love of the subject matter and a desire to teach it;
c) Constraints of the student teacher role;
d) Attitude, or the teacher role.

Table 1 (continued)

Sean:
a) Developing and maintaining a positive interpersonal relationship with students;
b) Making the study of English, a low priority for students, as pleasant as possible;
c) Gaining instructional experience through trial and error to find out what will work in the classroom;
d) Acknowledging a teacher's unique, neither right not wrong approach to teaching English;
e) Tacit knowledge of teaching.

Simon:
a) Imagination and creativity in teaching;
b) Teaching English: organization, planning, evaluation, and expectations;
c) The press of time and the rhythm of school;
d) The student teacher role;
e) Teaching as personal involvement.

Terry:
a) Interpersonal relationships;
b) Implementing a unique teaching style;
c) Ownership and responsibility for the classroom;
d) Time pressures and the rhythm of school;
e) Gaining experience;
f) The character of teaching language arts at the senior high level.

Figure 1. Themes Emerging from Pattern Matching the Case Studies.

A. The task of becoming a real teacher:
   1. Classroom ownership/constraints of the student teacher role
   2. Gaining experience

B. Interpersonal relationships:
   1. Positive interpersonal relationships, caring, and rapport
   2. Making language arts fun
   3. Literature and composition as subjective, different from math or science content

C. Curriculum and Instruction--planning driven by time:
   1. The rhythm of school, constraints of time, instructional pacing (technical control)
   2. Planning by thematic units, activities, daily plans

Figure 2. Four barriers of classroom ownership.